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MY QUEEN

MARION MARLOWE IN CHICAGO

OR TRAPPED BY A LUNATIC

BY GRACE SHIRLEY

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Here Is Health

53 Leading St, Cleveland, O.,
Oct. 7, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM.

Dear Sir:—I am pleased to inform you that your Remedies have completely cured me. I was troubled with weak lungs and chest, and also had catarrh. I *know* the Slocum System is the best in the world, and I will recommend your medicine to all who may be in need of Remedies of their character.

Yours truly,
HARRY L. LYON.

McComb, Pike Co., Miss.,
Oct. 2, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—I write to let you know that your Remedies have entirely cured my little girl of scrofula and I feel very thankful to you for all your kindness.

Yours respectfully,
MALISIA ADISON.

Wesson, Copiah Co., Miss.,
Oct. 4, 1900.

DR. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir.—In reply to your kind letter I wish to say that since taking your Remedies I am sound as a dollar. I believe had it not been for your medicine I would now be in my grave. I feel very thankful to you for the cure that was performed in my case, and beg to remain,

Yours sincerely,
CHAS. VAN NORDEN.

Woodland, St. Joseph Co.,
Oct. 9, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—My little boy had catarrh in the head very badly. When he was five years old I saw your medicine advertised and tried it and he now is entirely cured. I can highly recommend your medicine to anyone.

Yours respectfully,
MRS. ASA TABER.

Grove Park, Alachua Co., Fla.,
Oct. 19, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—I received your letter, also the Remedies that you sent at my request and hope you will pardon my long delay in writing to you to recommend your good medicine. The pain in my breast has vanished and I am feeling a great deal stronger than before. I shall recommend your Remedies to all in my town who are suffering from consumption or any disorder of the throat, chest and lungs. Thanking you very kindly for what you have done for me, I remain,

Yours respectfully,
M. I. BOOKER.

Oran, Onondaga Co., N. Y.,
Sept. 1[illegible]

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—The cough which has troubled me so long is now entirely gone, and I owe my restoration to your wonderful Remedies. I am getting stronger every day for which I feel very thankful to you, and shall recommend your Remedies to everybody.

Yours respectfully,
CHAS. H. DARLING.

For All Who Have Weak Lungs

FREE

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The treatment is **free.** You have only to write for it and try it.

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They Cure.

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MY QUEEN
A WEEKLY JOURNAL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

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Marion Marlowe in Chicago;

OR,

TRAPPED BY A LUNATIC.

By GRACE SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

A FIENDISH PLOT.

"I say, Bill!"

"Well, out with it, Preston!"

"The Temple Theatrical Company is booked for Chicago this week, ain't it?"

"What if it is?"

"I was thinking we might square that little account with Temple, old man; but, of course, if you've decided to let it drop, I'll——"

"Me let anything drop! Not on your life, Preston! He's given you and me the throw-down and we'll 'do' him yet! But what is your scheme, old man? I can see you're planning something."

"Planning! I should say I was! I've been planning, Bill, ever since I ran away from that cursed lunatic asylum, where they took me after my trial in Albany. I've laid awake nights thinking how I would get even with Temple! There's only one way to do it and that is to break up his company!"

"Yes, they are making fame and fortune for him," was the surly answer. "Why, ever since they jailed me in Buffalo they've been cutting swaths through the country. That Marion Marlowe is the handsomest actress on the boards! As long as she is his star he is bound to make money!"

"And you and I are on our uppers," growled Percy Preston, angrily. "I tell you it makes my blood boil every time I think of it!"

"Well, out with your scheme! It is bound to be a good one; but see here, Preston, you've got to go easy! Suppose the authorities catch sight of you! Back you go into an asylum! There's an alarm out for you now; I've seen it in the papers!"

Percy Preston's white face grew gray with rage and his voice vibrated with passion as he snarled an answer.

"And I'm about as crazy as they are," he muttered. "We've been together a week now, Bill; have you seen anything crazy about me? Naturally, when a man loses his head and flings the wrong girl off of a train into the river, he acts a little queer, but I got over it before I'd been three days in that asylum! Oh, there are no bolts and bars that will hold me, Jones! Mark my words, I'll stay free now until I get square with my enemies!"

"Well, you've got to be mighty careful," was the quiet answer, and then Bill Jones, who had once been a "supe" with the Temple Theatrical Company, sat down to listen to his companion's plan to punish those whom he hated. The two young men had been acquainted years before in the far West, and had recently met and renewed their acquaintance.

Percy Preston had been engaged in New York to play heavy *rôles* with the Temple Theatrical Company during a road tour through the West, but there was a young girl in the cast whom he hated bitterly, and during a heavy thunder storm he had thrown her, as he supposed, from the train; but in reality his victim was Miss Marion Marlowe, the beautiful and talented star of the company. Miss Marlowe was saved, but for this he had been incarcerated in jail; then, as he appeared to be deranged, he was transferred to an insane asylum. His conversation with his companion showed plainly that he had escaped and, furthermore, that he had threatened to be avenged for his fancied injuries. The conversation between the two took place in a dingy bar room on one of the worst streets in St. Louis, and as the plotters talked their voices grew lower and lower and they took frequent drinks of vile whisky and other liquors. As Preston had said, they were "on their uppers," which meant that they were both out of work and out of money, except the small quantity of change which they were now squandering for drink.

Neither of them could get work in their chosen profession. Bill Jones was not wanted, for good "supes" were too plentiful, and Percy Preston did not dare to expose his identity for fear of being hustled back into the asylum or the prison to serve out his sentence.

They were two desperate men and the liquor was fast making them more vicious; and, at last, Preston brought his hand down on the table in an emphatic manner.

"That's what we'll do, old man!" he muttered, under his breath; "we'll get to Chicago by hook or crook! Once there, the rest will be easy if we've got a dollar in our pockets! I know scores of men in that town who will do what we want. Why, they'd commit murder outright if you jingled sufficient coin!"

"That's zhe gang we want," said Bill Jones, grimly, beginning to show by his conversation the effects of the liquor he was drinking, "but your scheme sh' all right, Preston, and it's an easy one to work! Now, thing for you to do is to disguise yourself cleverly and drop name Preston once and forever."

"I'll be Jack Hart from this time on," said Preston, with a scowl, "and I'll get m'self up so m'own mother wouldn't know me. Have 'nother drink, pard, and success to 'r plot! Here's that we may oblitrate name of Temple f'rever and square our account with all our enemies!"

He raised a glass of whisky above his head, but his companion was even more under the influence of the stuff than himself, and a maudlin laugh accompanied a fiendish whisper.

"Hold on, Jack Hart! I can go you one better'n that, you fool! Here's to Marion Marlowe, prettiest girl in world! May we be ones to sully her beauty and wreck zhe hope and ambitions every man who loves her!"

A hoarse laugh from Preston followed the dreadful toast. Then both men gulped down their whisky and staggered out of the bar-room. Two more vindictive natures could not have been created!

A drop of whisky turned Bill Jones into a vicious sneak, but it fired Percy Preston's brain to the verge of madness—a madness which rivaled the evil one in cunning, and which would stop at nothing to accomplish its purpose.

CHAPTER II.

THE TEMPLE THEATRICAL COMPANY.

Three days after the bar-room conversation between these two desperate fellows, a merry party of young people occupied an end of one of the handsome "sleepers" on the Illinois Central, speeding northward. They laughed and chatted gayly as the train rushed on, little dreaming that any one in the world could be so wicked as to deliberately plot to do them injury.

"How long before we reach Chicago, Bert? I'm anxious to see something besides prairie."

It was Marion Marlowe, the beautiful star of the Temple Theatrical Company, who made the inquiry, as she gazed from the window a little wearily.

Bert Jackson, the youthful comedian of the company, glanced out a minute before he answered.

"At least a couple of hours, I should judge," he said, disgustedly; "and I am getting hungry again. I wonder if I could bribe the darky in the dining-car to give me another breakfast."

"I doubt if you could," observed Dr. Brookes, the leading man, from across the aisle; "I think we ate almost everything he had."

"He did offer me some more tooth-picks," said Bert, regretfully; "I wish I hadn't refused them."

"Oh, Mr. Jackson! Won't you please help me shut this window," cried a coquettish voice; "I can't manage it at all," and a pretty young woman in the seat ahead of Miss Marlowe looked at Bert, beseechingly.

"I fly to your rescue, fair maiden!" exclaimed Bert, melodramatically, as he closed the obstreperous sash, sat down beside the young woman and entered into conversation with her.

"I don't like that Miss Watson one bit," said Miss Ellis, the *ingénue*, to Miss Alma Allyn; "she's just making a dead set at Bert and he don't seem to understand it!"

"Bert is not at all foolish that way, dear; especially since his experience in St. Louis," said Miss Allyn, soothingly. "If he happens to chat with her a little, why leave him alone. He will come back to you when he's tired of her."

"I wish he'd get tired right off, then," was the petulant reply, "for he's been hanging around her ever since she joined the company at St. Louis, and I think he ought to show the rest of us some attention."

"Meaning yourself," said Miss Allyn, slyly, "I'm afraid you are jealous."

"No, indeed," replied Miss Ellis, flushing. "I wouldn't be jealous of a boy like that!"

"A very nice sort of 'boy' nevertheless," was the answer. "Bert is the very best fellow I know, man or boy, isn't he, Dr. Brookes?"

"Bert's chief recommendation, to my mind," said the doctor, gravely, "is his steadfast devotion to Miss Marlowe. He is so much in love with her," he continued, with

a twinkle in his eye, "that no other woman has the least possible chance to make any impression on him."

"Oh,. pshaw! Dr. Brookes; now you are trying to plague me," laughed Miss Ellis. "It won't do any good, though, for all we girls are in love with Marion, quite as much so as you and Bert and Mr. Temple."

It was Dr. Brookes' turn to change color. He had been in love with Marion Marlowe for a long time before she went on the stage, and since both of them had been traveling in the same company his affection had grown almost daily.

Mr. Temple, the manager of the company, had also fallen in love with his beautiful star, and the fact had been made evident to the members of the company that, in a sense, he and the leading man were rivals for the hand of Marion Marlowe, though it had not interfered with their relations toward each other.

"My regard for Miss Marlowe," said Dr. Brookes, gravely, "is that of one satellite for another. It's a simple astronomical proposition, isn't it, Miss Allyn?"

"Yes, I can see that," said Miss Allyn, laughing, "and when you gaze at her in that admiring, 'all-for-you-and-the-world-well-lost' style, I suppose you are simply star-gazing! Well, I am awfully glad I've got so much company! Being in love myself, I can appreciate your feelings. But, oh, dear me, what an awful racket!"

The brakes grated noisily upon the wheels, and the train came to a sudden stop just as she finished speaking.

"Hello! I wonder what's up now," exclaimed Dr. Brookes; "more wash outs, I suppose."

Bert Jackson stuck his head out of the window and pulled it back hastily.

"Band of Indians on the track!" he cried; "they've scalped the locomotive and are now surrounding the baggage-car! They are mounted on buffaloes and one of them is a-straddle of an automobile. I suppose he is the high-muck-a-muck!"

"What nonsense, Bert," replied Marion; "why don't you tell us what really is the matter?"

"Do you want to know?" asked Bert. "The engine is in the same condition as the famous governor of North Carolina—its throat is dusty and it's taking a drink. There is really one Indian out there, though, for a fact; he's a wooden one and he's nailed up on the top of the tank-house doing duty as a weather-vane."

"I hope that Temple has secured berths for us at a good hotel," said Dr. Brookes, as the train started again.

"It was real good of him to go on ahead," observed Marion; "I know he will get much nicer quarters than the advance agent would have secured, and I think it was very thoughtful of him."

"I hope so, too," remarked Bert. "If I have to sleep on a billiard-table, I'll strike for a raise of salary. That's what most of the beds have reminded me of since we started. But that's better than sleeping in the station-house, eh, Miss Marlowe?" he finished, slyly.

Marion Marlowe laughed aloud and the company all joined her. Bert's sly reference to Marion's being locked in a cell in a police-station in Columbus was a joke now, even if it had been serious enough at the time. She had been made the victim of a cruel conspiracy, but through the efforts of her friends was released after a few hours' imprisonment.

"I don't think that Mr. Temple is looking for free board," said Marion, "and that is the sort one gets at the resort you refer to, Bert."

"There's one fellow in this world who ought to have free board and have it permanently," remarked Bob Hinton, the cal-

cium man, who came into the car just then; "and that's that fellow Bill Jones."

"Temple's old 'supe,' the fellow who tried to 'queer' us at Buffalo?" inquired Dr. Brookes. "What put him into your head just now, Hinton?"

"Well, I thought I saw him through a window in the smoking-car of the train Mr. Temple took. You know I saw him on board, and the idea has bothered me ever since. I wish I had made sure that it was Jones; I'd have warned Mr. Temple."

"I guess you were mistaken. I don't believe that Jones would have any reason to come West; probably it was some one who resembled him," said the doctor. "Temple can take care of himself, anyway."

"Just the same, I wish I'd made sure," muttered Hinton.

"What is Chicago like, Mr. Jackson?" inquired Miss Watson; "I've never been there."

"Chicago," said Bert, impressively, "is the metropolis of the West and the future Rome of America. It is situated on both sides of the Chicago River, which is never wet except when it rains. At such times they are able to move the current of the river with derricks and steam engines. Chicago is also celebrated for its remarkable women, who are known by the size of their feet."

"Why, Bert!" exclaimed Marion; "you told me only yesterday that you'd never been to Chicago!"

"I never have," replied Bert; "that is why I know so much about it. I learned that fact about the Chicago girls' feet in my geography when I went to school. We used to study maps of them."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Miss Ellis, "I used to know a girl from Chicago, and her foot wasn't any larger than mine."

"And that is the prettiest little foot on the stage," said Bert, gallantly.

Miss Ellis blushed with pleasure at this unexpected compliment, but Miss Watson turned and gazed out of the window. She was plainly nettled at the fact that Bert was willing to pay any courtesy to another woman.

"Don't get mad," said Bert to her, quietly; "I dare say you've got feet, too."

"I think you're horrid," retorted the girl, "and you seemed like a nice fellow at first."

"That's just what's the matter with me," said Bert, cheerfully; "I seem like such an awful nice fellow at first that I can't keep it up. I sort of fall behind my own record—get way back in the rear ranks of my own procession, instead of sticking by the band wagon. It's a positive detriment to a chap to have such winning ways that the girls all overvalue at first sight. If I could only keep my climaxes for the fourth act instead of springing them right off in the very first scene, I'd be a glittering success with the ladies. As it is I—— Hello!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "we must be getting near Chicago. There are the stock-yards!"

Miss Ellis took a look out of the window and then glanced at Marion.

"Do you know I never come to a town that I don't ask myself a question, Marion?" she said, anxiously. "I always wonder what is coming next! We've had something in the shape of a tragedy in nearly every city we have played in!"

Marion smiled very faintly; she had been thinking of that, too. The career of the Temple Theatrical Company seemed paved with tragedies.

CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

"Just look at those cattle!" exclaimed Miss Watson, the new member of the company; "why, there must be thousands of them, Mr. Jackson!"

"Yes, I should say there were thousands,"

answered Bert, "a good many thousands. That is one of those places where they put a live steer in a slide at one end of the building and in five minutes the steer comes out of four different slides at the other end. One delivers canned corned beef, the next, porterhouse steaks, the third, *consommé* and the fourth, rib-roasts. It's a great invention, I tell you."

"You've forgotten something, Bert," said Alma Allyn, as she turned toward him with a merry look in her bright eyes; "there are the bones and skin and the hoofs still to be accounted for."

"Oh, they come out in the canned corned beef, of course. Didn't you ever eat any? You wouldn't ask such a foolish question if you had," retorted Bert.

"Oh, Mifter Jackson, please lift me up so I can thee the pigth. Mamma says there's thimply loads of them," called out a childish voice, and little Ruby, the child actress, came running down the aisle and clambered up on Bert's knee.

"Yes," said Bert, gravely, "that big building is where they put a pig in one end of the machine and he comes out of the other end all made up into sausages and pork pies. Now, you can't say I've forgotten anything this time, Alma!"

"Bert's information is varied enough to suit any palate, if not strictly accurate," said Dr. Brookes. "We will be at the station in the heart of the city of Chicago within a few minutes."

"So this is the metropolis of the West, is it?" exclaimed Miss Ellis. "Well, I'm awfully glad to get here; I'm sick and tired of looking at the endless prairie that I've seen every time I glanced out of the car window. Even stock yards are an improvement on that!"

"Well, we are booked for a week here, so you'll have a chance to see the whole town," answered Bert, coming down the aisle and seating himself on the arm of her seat. "And if you'll promise to be good," he continued, "I'll let you see it with me."

Miss Ellis smiled up in his face brightly. She saw a hidden meaning in his words and speedily forgot her jealousy of Miss Watson.

"I shall be delighted, Bert," she murmured; "I hope we won't have many rehearsals, then there will be so much more time to go about."

Just then the train began to slacken speed, and in a few minutes pulled into the long train-shed at the terminus.

"Here's where we set foot on the classic soil of Chicago," cried Bert, as he swung off the step. "Now, where's Temple, I wonder? He said he'd meet us at the station."

"He's probably outside," said Orrin Olcott, the "villain" of the company. "Let's walk through the waiting-room and, if he isn't there, the ladies can sit down while we look about the station for him. He may be in the baggage-room giving directions about the luggage."

"That's so," responded Bert. "Come on, girls, and we'll put you somewhere so you won't get lost. This is a big city for pretty girls like you to get lost in. You might fall into the river and have to be dug out."

They all sauntered slowly through the station, chatting as they went, and then the men left their hand-bags with the ladies of the company and went out on the sidewalk and looked about for their manager.

"I'll go into the baggage-room," said Bert; "you chaps stay here, so I'll know where to find you if I get lost."

"There's not much chance of that boy's getting lost," said Olcott, as he left them.

"No, indeed," replied Dr. Brookes; "he not only can't lose himself, but he found Miss Marlowe once when we were all at our wits'

end. Bert is a very smart fellow, and I imagine the girls all agree with me."

"Miss Ellis and Miss Watson do, I am confident," replied Olcott, grinning. "If those two girls don't turn his head, he is made of pretty good stuff. Here he comes now!"

"He's not in there," cried Bert, coming back from the baggage-room, "and the man in charge says he hasn't seen him."

"Probably he's up to his ears in work at the theatre and overlooked the fact that it was time for us to arrive," said Dr. Brookes.

"Well, keep the girls amused and I'll run over there in a cab and find out where we are to locate," volunteered Bert. "It won't take me long, and we will get settled ever so much sooner than if we hung around here."

Dr. Brookes nodded, and he and Olcott turned back into the depot as Bert sprang into a hansom that was waiting.

It seemed hardly ten minutes before he came rushing into the waiting-room.

"Say, this is the queerest thing I ever struck!" he exclaimed, as he approached the group. "What do you think! Temple has not been at the theatre, at all, and they don't know where he is. The box-office isn't open and they have been wondering if we meant to cancel the engagement. I can't understand Temple at all! What could have become of him?"

"He left for Chicago all right," remarked Bob Hinton. "I stayed with him until the train began to move, and the last thing he said to me was to be sure and see that the property-man had his traps in shape, because he wanted to have a rehearsal of the third act with costumes and scenery this afternoon, so as to be sure everything would go all right to-night."

"Something must have happened to him," declared Marion. "I do hope that he has not met with any accident."

"If he had, he would certainly have telegraphed to us or would have had some one here to meet us in his place," said Dr. Brookes, in a puzzled manner. "I can't understand it at all."

"I can understand one thing," said Bob Hinton, gruffly, "and that is that I wish I had made sure that was Bill Jones I saw in the smoking-car of that train. If he put up some game to get the best of Mr. Temple, our manager may have been sand-bagged or black-jacked or anything by now. That fellow is a sneak and he is dead sore on Mr. Temple. He would not stop at anything to make trouble for him."

"It looks to me as if he had never reached Chicago. Has there been any accident on the railroad?" asked Dr. Brookes.

Bert shook his head. "No; I asked them that in the baggage-room the first thing. There hasn't even been a train late for a week."

Olcott, who had slipped quietly away from the group a few minutes before, now returned with a bit of information.

"I've been talking with the men in the baggage-room," he said, "and one of them remembers Mr. Temple perfectly. He got here all right yesterday morning and claimed his hand-bag. That is the last they saw of him. His dress-suit case is still there, unclaimed; I saw it myself."

"Well, of all the strange experiences since we started, this is the strangest!" said Alma Allyn. "It's simply beyond any explanation!"

"It's a pretty kettle of fish! Here we are and no manager, no theatre, no hotel, no anything. Why, Temple must have gone crazy!" cried Bert, in bewilderment.

"He's been worried half sick by troubles of one sort or another ever since we started on this trip," said Marion, anxiously. "It is just possible that he has broken down under the

strain. I would rather think that than that he had met with foul play."

"So would I, Miss Marlowe," exclaimed Bob Hinton; "but there's no denying that Mr. Temple has enemies, and any number of them. Why, every good-for-nothing actor that he has ever discharged has got it in for him, and as for the managers of rival shows —well, you know how we were treated by Rippel and Rose at Buffalo and the Lemadrid Company at Cohoes!"

Marion's sweet mouth grew sad as she recalled those unpleasant experiences where rival companies had resorted to all sorts of dishonest tricks to spoil their business.

"Of course, they won't tackle Temple when his company is with him," continued Hinton; "but if they saw him arrive in Chicago alone, no one knows what game they may have put up on him! I may be wrong, but it looks mighty suspicious."

"It does, indeed," said Dr. Brookes, thoughtfully. "I guess we were too easy on those people you spoke of, Hinton. When men stoop to such vile tricks to injure a brother man they ought to get the full penalty; and I give you my word, if this turns out to be a trick by one of those fellows, I'll see him behind the bars myself if it costs a fortune!"

Hinton nodded his head vigorously at the doctor's comments.

"I can't get over thinking that Bill Jones is at the bottom of it," he muttered, again. "He's only a sneak and a tool for others, but I'm dead sure he rode to Chicago on the same train with Mr. Temple."

"The question is, what shall we do first?" said the doctor, turning to Marion.

The young girl looked thoughtful for a moment before she replied.

"Suppose we appoint a new manager to act in his place," she suggested, finally.

"A capital idea! And I move that Miss Marion Marlowe be our choice!" cried the doctor, quickly.

"I second that motion," shouted Bert, as he listened. "I'm ready to take orders this minute, Miss Manager!"

Marion's beautiful cheeks flushed and her eyes danced with merriment.

"Very well, then, Bert, you and Hinton go to the theatre and have the box-office opened, while Dr. Brookes takes us to a hotel and secures rooms for us. You shall be my partner, Bert, so you must be very dignified. Have everything at the theatre in order, just as Mr. Temple would do it."

"Come on, Hinton!" cried Bert. "Let's hurry down to the theatre and hustle things along. I intend to have a full house there to-night or break my neck trying! But, meanwhile, I'll find some time to look for the manager!"

"I guess we had better go to the Richelieu. Try and meet us there about noon, Bert, if you can, and we'll plan what to do next," said the doctor.

"The next thing to do," said Marion, as her party hailed a couple of carriages, "is to look for Mr. Temple. He must be somewhere in the city, and we must not leave a stone unturned until we find him."

"We'll attend to that just as soon as we see you safely in the hotel, Marion," Dr. Brookes replied. "You ladies all want rest after the long ride on the cars, and if you slept as little last night as I did, you certainly need a few hours' repose."

As Marion entered the carriage she shook her head sadly.

"I shall not rest one minute until we find Mr. Temple," she said, in her gentle voice. "I cannot help feeling that something dreadful has overtaken him!"

CHAPTER IV.

A "PERSONAL."

An hour later a general alarm had been turned in for Mr. Temple, but the chief of police could only shake his head over the results.

"We may find him and we may not," he said, a little dubiously. "Anyhow, we can't promise a report until this time to-morrow."

"Oh, that is dreadful!" cried Marion, when she heard the verdict. "To think that we must wait a whole day before learning anything definite! The suspense will be awful! How will we ever endure it?"

She was on the verge of weeping when they reached the hotel, but she was by far too brave to let her emotions overcome her.

Everything must be done to make the first performance a success, even though their hearts were aching with this terrible uncertainty.

There was a hurried luncheon and a rehearsal on the stage of the theatre, but the hours passed with no tidings of Mr. Temple. As soon as rehearsal was over a personal search for the manager was instituted, each member of the company making a special effort to find him.

At half-past seven in the evening Marion and Miss Allyn were just putting the last touches to their hasty toilets in their room at the hotel when Bert tapped on the door.

"Oh, Bert! Have you heard anything?" were the young star's first words.

Bert tossed his hat on the table and sat down wearily.

"Not a word," he said, disconsolately; "and the doctor and I have been everywhere that we can possibly think of. We've pulled every wire in town, but not a sign have we seen of Mr. Temple."

"I have been to three newspaper offices and inserted notices," said Miss Allyn. "I thought it might do some good, and I had to do something."

"And I have been to four hospitals," was Marion's reply, "and just as soon as the sun rises to-morrow morning I shall make a tour of the rest of them."

"I guess we've done all we can," said Bert, with a sigh, "and there's one thing sure—we're going to have a good house to-night. There's not a seat left except a few in the gallery."

"How will we ever get through without breaking down," cried Miss Allyn, nervously. "Oh, dear! If we only knew he was alive it would be a little better!"

"Oh, Marion!" cried Miss Ellis, as she came rushing into the room; "I've just found a 'personal' in the evening paper; do read it, quick! It may not mean anything at all, but some way I can't help thinking it refers to Mr. Temple!"

She held out a paper as she spoke, and the young girl seized it eagerly.

"Why, it is addressed to 'M. M.'!" she cried, the moment she saw it. "I wonder if it really is intended for me!"

Alma leaned over her shoulder and Bert listened as she read it, but the curiously worded paragraph was very bewildering.

"S. A. Insensible. Immediate."

Marion read the words aloud and then stared at the signature.

"'Jack Hart'! who can he be? I never heard of him," she said, slowly.

Her friends shook their heads; they had never heard the name either, and before they had solved the mystery of the "personal" it was time to go to the theatre.

Marion clipped the paragraph from the paper and put it in her pocket. She was determined to puzzle it out at her earliest opportunity.

"It may refer to Mr. Temple, and it may not," she said, sadly; "but, anyway, I am determined to begin my search early to-morrow morning. I can't wait for the police a minute longer."

Another girl who had passed through Marion's dangerous experiences in the various big cities she had visited would have hesitated before venturing on such an errand in Chicago, but the little country girl was eager and impulsive; besides, she never thought of danger to herself when her friends were in peril.

Over and over again she had gone to the rescue of some one, only to become a victim herself in some frightful tragedy; but the thrilling episodes in her career hardly left a trace of nervousness, and she would have braved threefold greater dangers to save a friend like Mr. Temple.

When the curtain was raised for the performance a little later no one in the audience would have dreamed that she was suffering, for the young star had thrown her whole heart into her efforts in order to please her absent friend and manager.

As she was hurrying from the stage after the second act, she suddenly stopped in the scene-room and stood motionless a moment. The words of the "personal" had been burning themselves into her brain, and, all at once, she understood them.

"Oh, it must mean the 'Sheltering Arms,'" she whispered to herself. "Why, I read the name of that hospital to-day! It is way out on the north side of the city! He is there, 'insensible,' and needs 'immediate' attention!"

She bounded up the stairs and into her dressing-room, intending to tell Miss Allyn her deciphering of the puzzling paragraph.

"I don't believe I will tell a word," she whispered, finally. "It will be such a disappointment to them all if I am mistaken. I'll go there myself and see if I am right, and, what is more, I'll go to-night, right after the performance!" She set her sweet lips firmly, and a little frown darkened her white forehead, but, a moment later, when Alma came in, she was smiling brightly.

"You were magnificent to-night, dearie," began her friend, admiringly, "and you just ought to have seen the doctor look at you. Why, his heart was in his eyes, the dear fellow!"

"Poor doctor! I wish I could love him as he desires," said Marion, sadly. "He is so loyal and true; but I seem incapable of loving. Oh, well, some day, Alma, I shall learn the sweet lesson!"

"I hope so, dearie," was Miss Allyn's answer. Then both went down to the stage again to go through with their duties.

When the final curtain was reached, Marion hurried to her dressing-room; she was very anxious, indeed, to get ahead of Miss Allyn.

Miss Ellis called to her, but she hardly waited to reply, as she was determined to leave the theatre ahead of the others.

"I will not let them worry about me," she thought, as she scribbled a note to Miss Allyn, "but I must get to that hospital this very night. I can ride there in a cab, so I'll be perfectly safe, and in two hours I ought to be back at the hotel, perhaps with the knowledge that Mr. Temple is safe."

It was not an easy matter for her to leave the theatre without any one seeing her, but, by watching her chance, she finally managed it. Once outside, she fairly flew down the street in search of a cab, and, in less than ten minutes she was speeding toward the hospital known as the Sheltering Arms, her heart throbbing with the hope that she would find Mr. Temple.

And in another cab directly behind her followed a fellow wearing a clever disguise, who had been watching the stage door throughout the whole evening.

It was Percy Preston, or "Jack Hart," as he called himself, and his brain was seething with vicious thoughts, which had been aggravated by copious drinks of whisky.

"I've got her at last," he muttered, while a crafty look crept into his eyes. "She's the beautiful star who is making Temple's fortune! Before morning I shall square my account with my ex manager!"

CHAPTER V.

THE MANIAC.

As the cab sped along, Marion caught her first glimpse of Lake Michigan, and the sight of the gleaming water gave her a shudder of horror.

Suppose he was there, lying in those silent

depths! The thought was awful, yet such things had happened.

It was a dark, almost starless night, yet the water gleamed like silver as she caught occasional glimpses of it from the carriage window.

Then the tall buildings hid it from her view and Marion leaned forward interestedly, watching the panorama of life that passed before her vision. It was all so strange to her—this life in a big city. A few months in New York had by no means made her accustomed to it, and the incessant struggle, the noise, the confusion and the keen rivalry in everything was a never-ending source of wonder and bewilderment.

"It is all so different from the country," she mused. "There, all was calm, monotonous, almost deathlike! There was nothing to fear and nothing to avoid, while here one hardly dares to step upon the streets! There are dangers on every side and pitfalls to every comer."

A sigh escaped her, and she leaned back in the cab. They were leaving the brightly-lighted streets now and speeding through long blocks that seemed almost dark in contrast. Then the buildings began to grow lower and more squalid in appearance and the jolting over the rough cobbles became almost unbearable. They were nearing a neighborhood notorious for its lawlessness, but Marion knew nothing of this, so it did not frighten her.

Suddenly the cabman turned and peered down at her curiously.

"Belong at the Arms, Miss?" he asked, with a peculiar accent.

Marion wondered a little, but, remembering the lateness of the hour, she thought it best to make some explanations.

"No, I do not belong there," she said, very simply. "I am going there to find a friend who has met with an accident. I only heard to-night that he had been taken to that hospital."

The man emitted a sound that alarmed her somewhat. It seemed for all the world as though he doubted her statements.

"Pretty note fer you to be comin' out here this time o' night," he said, gruffly. "It's worth ten dollars fer me ter bring you."

"But you said you would bring me for five," said Marion, quickly. "You surely will not go back on your word, sir."

There was another grunt and the man turned back to his horse, but, a moment later, the young girl could see that he was again peering down through the window.

She began to be frightened, but she was determined not to show it; but, oh, how she longed for a glimpse of the hospital!

But the ride seemed interminable, and the cab jolted and rattled over the stones until she began to fear that the driver was growing reckless or that he had been drinking liquor before they started.

Suddenly her blood ran cold as she glanced up through the window. The fellow had slowed up for a moment and was drawing a black bottle from his pocket. The next moment he put it to his mouth and took a long draught from it. Marion clasped her hands together tightly as she watched him. She was beginning to realize that she was at the mercy of the fellow.

Summoning all her courage, she tried to speak bravely, half rising in the cab and peering up at him. "Is it far to the Arms?" she asked, as calmly as possible. "If it is only a short distance, I can walk the rest of the way and then you will not feel that you are losing any money."

The man turned on his seat and bent so low that the vile fumes from his breath penetrated the carriage.

"I'll take you to the Arms, now I've started," he said, leeringly, "and I'll call it square, my beauty, if you will give me a kiss. Gee! but you've got a dandy pair o' eyes! Is it a go? Will you kiss me?"

He had stopped the horse in the middle of the street now, and, as Marion shrank back in the cab, she glanced sharply from the window. The place looked deserted. There was hardly a light visible. In an instant she began to tremble in every fibre of her body. Suppose he should attempt to kiss her—what could she do? Her first inclination was to spring from the carriage. Then once more she set her lips firmly and her hand wandered to her hair, where she wore an ornamental silver arrow. It was strong and sharp; she could defend herself for a minute, and—yes—

he was coming; she could see him descending from his high seat in a clumsy manner.

She braced herself in the carriage to await his approach.

If he opened the door on one side, she would spring from the other, then, if he caught her, she would fight desperately for escape from his embraces. In that instant it came to her how foolish she had been not to have brought either Bert or the doctor with her.

But there was no time for self-censure now, for the driver's hand was on the door and his drunken eyes were leering at her through the carriage window.

His hand was so clumsy from drink that he fumbled at the heavy catch, and, before he had opened it, Marion had loosened the other.

"How dare you!" she cried, as he suddenly thrust his bloated face and coarse body half way into the carriage. There was only a hoarse laugh and then the fiend made a lunge at her. With a cry of horror, the young girl fairly bounded from the vehicle and made a dash for liberty down the almost ink-black thoroughfare.

She heard a curse fall from the man's lips and understood at once. He was too drunk to follow her, and she had not paid him. For a moment, she almost smiled, even in the midst of her terror.

"Can I help you, miss? Are you in trouble?" called out a peculiar voice, as she sped along. Marion stopped short in amazement. She had come upon another cab standing still in the middle of the street, and the man who had spoken was leaning from its window.

For just a moment Marion's only thought was one of joy.

Here was help at hand to protect her from that brutal driver.

"Oh, sir," she cried, gratefully, "if you only would help me! I hired that fellow to drive me to the Sheltering Arms and he has been drinking all the way and now he has insulted me!"

Before the words had left her lips, the occupant of the second cab was on the pavement beside her.

"Quick! He is coming!" he said, briefly. Get into my carriage! He is a burly brute! Too big for me to handle!"

Marion had no alternative, and she was sick with fright.

In an instant she sprang into the cab, and her rescuer followed her; the next minute they were dashing along in the most reckless manner.

Marion stared out of the window until the cab that she had hired was swallowed up in the darkness; then, with a sigh of relief, she turned to her companion.

"Oh, sir, how will I ever thank you!" she began, in grateful tones; then her tongue seemed to become palsied and her heart stood still with terror. The man who occupied the same seat with her in that tiny space had suddenly leaned forward and put one hand on her knee, which brought his face close to her own and in the full glare of the cab lamp.

Marion took one sharp glance at the cleverly-disguised features, and, in that glance, her keen eyes seemed to penetrate everything; she knew in an instant what fate had come upon her.

"Percy Preston! You!" she murmured, between her white lips.

The fellow moved his face a little closer so that it nearly touched her own. "No, not Percy Preston now, but Jack Hart!" he cried, shrilly; then he burst out into a peal of the most blood-curdling laughter.

Marion drew back as far as she could against the heavy cushions.

She was face to face with a desperate character—a man whom she knew to be a dangerous maniac.

She shut her lips tightly and set her teeth for the ordeal, then the hand that held the silver arrow closed upon it determinedly.

CHAPTER VI.

A HIDEOUS RIDE.

But Percy Preston had no idea of attacking his victim. He had followed her to this spot for quite a different purpose.

Whether her own driver had been in league with him Marion could not tell, but, as she sat holding her frail weapon where his wandering glances would not rest upon it, she

could see that the cab had turned in quite another direction.

The streets were growing even rougher, and the buildings on either side looked rambling and dilapidated, while only a few of the straggling gas lamps were lighted.

Where was he taking her, and what could she do?

She asked herself these questions over and over, but could find no answer. The madman had drawn back in the cab and was muttering to himself. After that first definite statement, his mind seemed to wander.

Marion could not frame a word; she was too thoroughly alarmed, and, moreover, she was saving all her strength to be ready for what might follow.

Once she thought of crying out to the driver to come to her aid, but then the thought flashed instantly into her mind that it would be of no avail, inasmuch as he had been hired by Preston to follow her cab and was probably his accessory in whatever crime was intended.

For it was perfectly plain to the young girl that this was a deliberate plot. The name of "Jack Hart" and the "personal" in the paper were conclusive evidence, even to her untrained detective instincts.

Poor Mr. Temple! If he had fallen into a madman's plot, it was not strange that he was lost in oblivion! And to think that she could not go to him now! Could not even determine if he were really in that hospital! The thought came to her with terrible bitterness, even in her perilous position, for she knew exactly how he must be suffering, if he were alive and conscious—not over his own condition, but over the sorrows of those who grieved at his absence.

This fiend who sat beside her must have hated him bitterly; but what had she ever done to injure the fellow?

She had merely given evidence in the case where she, herself was the victim, and against the man who was so nearly her murderer.

But he was surely insane! There was no denying that! The courts had decided it at the very first hearing, and now she had only to look at the ghastly face and fiery eyeballs and listen to his mutterings to realize his true condition.

He had not been so bad when she entered the carriage, but the excitement of his plans had been too much for him, and he was rapidly degenerating from a cunning plotter to the realms of idiocy.

Marion had heard of these cases, but now she stared in horror. In all her thrilling experiences she had never been in such a position, for she was in reality the prisoner of a madman in one of the worst quarters of a strange city.

She watched him narrowly, hoping—she hardly knew what! Perhaps he would lapse into stupidity or into total unconsciousness.

Either condition would allow her to make her escape, provided the cab driver had no interest besides that of making money.

In the midst of her fearful reflections, she suddenly caught a full sentence from the madman's lips, and even in her own frightful peril she felt a twinge of pity for him.

"An innocent girl! I killed an innocent girl!" he muttered, hoarsely; then he flung up both hands and clutched frantically at his hair as he finished the sentence. "And her ghost has haunted me ever since! My God in Heaven! She is beside me this minute!"

Marion's white lips parted. She could not bear to see his agony.

Summoning all her courage, she leaned forward and touched him.

"I am not dead, Mr. Preston," she said, in a trembling whisper. "I am alive and well. You did not kill me!"

Percy Preston locked his hands together and glared at her in horror; it was his only intimation that he even heard her.

"Oh, Mr. Preston!" she went on, more bravely; "where are you taking me? Please listen to me a minute, won't you, Mr. Preston?"

Her eyes shone with eagerness as their gaze was bent upon his face, and this intensity seemed to calm the fellow.

A little of the fear left the staring eyes, and he was able to gaze at her fixedly for a minute.

"I want you to tell the driver to take us to the Sheltering Arms," said Marion, dis-

tinctly. "Tell him, Mr. Preston, or shall I tell him?"

There was no response, but Preston's lips were still moving. Marion leaned a little nearer and repeated her question.

As the last words left her lips the fellow put his hand to his brow.

Marion caught her breath sharply. He was regaining his senses.

"Quick! tell him!" she urged, after a brief moment of silence. "Remember, I am alone and helpless, and a woman, Mr. Preston! You certainly will not refuse to protect me in my trouble!"

"Protect you?"

Percy Preston muttered the words with the cunning creeping back into his eyes.

"Protect you, Marion Marlowe! Why should I protect you?"

Marion shrank back against the cushions. His voice had risen sharply. As she sat staring at him helplessly, he burst into a perfect paroxysm of raving.

"Oh, I'll protect you, Marion Marlowe, star of the Temple Theatrical Company!" he cried, shrilly. "I'll protect you, certainly; why wouldn't I, Marion Marlowe? Why, you are exquisite, do you know it?—a perfect beauty! There's not an angel in heaven that can compare with you, Marion! I'd sell my soul for you, my life! Why wouldn't I, Marion? Oh, you are sweet, rare, magnificent; and how I love you! Ha! ha! Do you hear that, Marion Marlowe? Percy Preston loves you!"

He had drawn near her again and was positively glaring into her face, the flames of red light in his eyeballs fairly scintillating in his fury.

"Yes! yes! I adore you, Marion Marlowe!" he went on, fiercely. "And I love Temple, too. Oh, how I love Temple! You were so good and kind to me, you know; oh, so good and kind, my dear Miss Marlowe! Why, you only sent me to a madhouse, you and Temple! To a place of torture, of horror, of despair! Ha! ha! That is all you did, you and Temple! you and Temple! A place reeking with horror! stifling with woe! Oh, it was so kind; and you did it! you and Temple, Miss Marlowe!"

"Don't! don't! Mr. Preston!"

It was all Marion could say.

His hot breath was upon her face, and she could feel his body trembling.

Would he kill her then and there?

Marion hardly realized his intentions, but surely in his frenzy he would do something —something.

She made one more effort to shrink away, and she put up her hand as if to push him from her.

"Mr. Preston! How can you?" she whispered, frantically. "How can you forget that I am alone and helpless? Let me out of this carriage at once, do you hear? Open the door for me this minute! You must! I demand it!"

Her voice was hoarse with anguish, but it only seemed to infuriate her captor. As he glared at her white face he broke out in peal after peal of that hideous laughter.

Marion was on the verge of desperation now; she could think of nothing but her safety.

With a quick bound, she rose to her feet and grasped the fastening of the door.

The next second she uttered a piercing cry of terror, for the maniac had bent forward and clutched at her throat. She could feel the cold, clammy touch of his desperate fingers.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RAFFLE.

As Marion's cry rang out upon the night, the cab gave a terrific jolt, and came suddenly to a standstill.

The young girl had exerted all her strength and had torn the madman's hand from her throat, and the next instant the door was thrown open and she plunged almost headlong into the arms of some one.

"Quick, men! He's got her!" cried a half-familiar voice; then, as Marion staggered toward the sidewalk, she found herself surrounded by three or four rough-looking negroes.

"He's crazy drunk, the jay!" cried the same voice, again. "Hustle her into the alley, men, and then help me with this fellow!"

Some one seized her by the arm; it was one of the negroes; and she was half led and half

carried through a pitch-black alley to the door of a dark, forlorn-looking building.

She tried to speak, but every faculty seemed paralyzed, and, in the plunge from the carriage, she had dropped her tiny weapon.

She was entirely at the mercy of her captors now, but at least it was a relief to be free from the maniac in the carriage.

After a great deal of fumbling at a rusty lock, she felt herself being led into a room, but it was so dark that she could not see her hand before her face.

A few steps further, and something impeded their progress. It was a wooden bench of some sort, and the fellow seated her upon it. Then he lighted a smoky kerosene lamp that was suspended from the ceiling, and the next moment Marion was alone in her hideous surroundings.

It was some time before she was calm enough to look around. When she did she discovered that the room was quite a large one, and was furnished with a dozen or more small, dirty wooden tables, with innumerable chairs piled one on top of another.

"The back room of a saloon," she whispered to herself. "Oh, how will I ever escape, and what will they do with me?"

She leaned her head upon one of the tables and a burst of tears relieved her.

Then it suddenly occurred to her that she had not heard a sound from her captors.

She moved cautiously from her seat and crept over to the door. It was at least a foot thick; no sound could penetrate it.

A moment later her quick eye discovered something strange about one of the panels, and detaching the smoking lamp from its chain, she held it close to the curious object.

It was merely a small knob, but she knew at once what it was for.

There was a small slide in one of the heavy panels that could be opened.

She went back to the table and set down the lamp, then softly extinguished the blaze and crept again to the panel.

There was not so much as a creak as she slid the small board softly from its place, but instantly a perfect bedlam of voices came through the aperture.

There was the clatter and clink of glasses and bottles and a perfect deluge of profanity; then came the unmistakable lingo of the lowest class of Italians.

"Negroes and Italians!" she whispered, with the blood freezing in her veins; "and all mad with drink! Oh, this is awful!"

But, although the sight made her weak with terror, she kept her eye at the tiny opening which she had made in the panel.

A score or more of men were drinking in the room, and in the midst of them sat Percy Preston, with a fellow at his side, whose voice had sounded so surprisingly familiar.

Marion stared at him sharply, but the light in the saloon was flickering and dim; it was a full minute before she recognized his features.

"Bill Jones, the 'supe,' another of poor Mr. Temple's enemies!" She recognized the fellow with a fresh thrill of horror.

Now it was clear, indeed! The plot was premeditated!

The confusing babel of tongues seemed to increase every moment, but the young girl seemed unconscious of everything for a time but the face of Percy Preston.

He sat with a glass of whisky before him in the very center of the excited crowd, but his face was as expressionless as a piece of marble.

They thought him drunk, but nothing more. It seemed incredible to her that they could be so stupid.

Bill Jones was talking to them as fluently as he could, and trying to make himself heard above the hubbub and confusion.

Suddenly there was almost total silence; even the clink of glasses ceased, and the ex-"supe" sprang excitedly upon one of the dirty tables.

"I know how we'll fix it!" Marion heard him say, distinctly. "It's the fairest way of all. What do you say to a raffle?"

A perfect roar of approval went up from the drunken crowd, and even the insane actor seemed to take a little interest.

Another bedlam of broken Italian and coarse English followed the suggestion, and then Marion could see a new variety of excitement.

"Thank God! they have forgotten me for the time!" she whispered to herself. "Oh,

if I only dared to call upon Jones to help me! But, no; he is a coward! I proved that at Buffalo!"

She closed the slide again and crept over to the table. There was a box of matches standing by the lamp, and in a minute she had the tiny wick blazing.

A careful glance around the room disclosed one high window. She could reach it by putting a chair on one of the tables.

She arranged her mode of escape as deftly as possible, then climbed up and opened the sash and looked from the window.

It was twenty feet from the ground, at the nearest calculation, and below was darkness, deep and impenetrable.

It was evidently the alley through which she had been led to her prison. But where did it lead to? That was the question.

It was a terrible risk to life and limb, and Marion paused in horror before she attempted it.

Hoping, she hardly knew what, she descended to the floor, extinguished the lamp, and once more cautiously opened the slide in the panel.

She was just in time to see a hideous sight.

Four men, all black, vicious-looking fellows, were engaged in a desperate struggle with the maniac.

As she put her eye to the aperture she saw them throw him bodily into the alley, then close and bolt the door behind him.

The next minute a man, who was evidently the proprietor of the place, began passing around a hat full of folded slips of paper and the rum-crazed fiends seized and opened them greedily.

A breathless silence ensued as they gazed with bleared eyes at the slips; then Bill Jones' voice rang out with terrible clearness.

"Whoever gets No. 20 can have the girl! Now, that is perfectly square, men; so let's have no fighting!"

Marion caught her breath, and her heart seemed to stand still. She understood now why they had not annoyed her.

"It was about me," she gasped, as she staggered from the door. "I have been raffled off to those infamous creatures!"

There was a roar from the saloon. She had forgotten to close the slide. The next instant a key grated in the rusty lock, but Marion did not wait. She fled, terror-stricken, toward the window.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MANIAC'S REVENGE.

It was one o'clock in the morning when Marion made her leap from the window, but not a ray of light nor a star was visible.

A carriage was standing at that minute before the door of the Sheltering Arms, and Alma Allyn and Miss Ellis were leaning from its windows.

A moment later Dr. Brookes and Bert Jackson came down the hospital steps, and in the light of the carriage lamps their faces looked pale and anxious.

"She hasn't been here at all."

It was Dr. Brookes who spoke, and the young man made no effort to conceal his anxiety.

"Then where is she? Oh, Marion! Marion! Why will you do such things!" cried Miss Allyn, tearfully.

"Something has happened; I am sure of it; and, oh, it may be something dreadful!"

"She may have changed her mind and gone back, and we may have missed her," said Bert; but there was not so much as a trace of cheerfulness in his hopeful suggestion.

"And Mr. Temple is not there?" asked Miss Ellis, eagerly.

Bert shook his head.

"No, nor any one that looks like him," he said, disconsolately. "That 'personal,' if it meant him, must have been only a trap for Marion."

"And she has fallen into it, poor dear," sighed Miss Allyn, sorrowfully. "Now, what shall we do next? Where shall we look for her?"

There was a moment of deep thought before any one answered.

"Let me see the note again, please," said the doctor, finally.

Alma Allyn took a scrap of paper from her glove and handed it to him. It was the note Marion had written her in the dressing-room of the theatre.

"I have gone to the Sheltering Arms Hos-

pital to look for Mr. Temple. Will telephone from there, so don't worry about me."

He read the words aloud and sighed as he finished.

"She must have started and then gone back," he said, desperately. "I cannot think of any other explanation."

"Suppose we ask them to let us telephone to the hotel," suggested Alma, shrewdly. "It will save us an hour's suspense, if they will let us do it."

Bert bounded back up the steps and rang the bell. It was several minutes before he was again admitted to the building.

Marion had not returned to the hotel. The night clerk at the Richelieu had been constantly on the lookout for her.

As Bert was hanging up the receiver he heard a peculiar sound. An ambulance call had been received at the hospital, and the locality was registered on an indicator right behind him.

He gave the matter no attention, for he was thinking deeply of Marion; but as he returned to the carriage the clang of the ambulance bell as the vehicle rumbled from the hospital gate seemed to thrill him from head to foot with a hideous sensation.

"Great Heaven! Suppose it should be for her!" he burst out, impetuously.

"Quick! Order the driver to follow!" cried Miss Allyn, sharply. "It will probably not be far, and we must relieve ourselves of this anxiety!"

Dr. Brookes gave the order and sprang into the carriage. The next minute they were dashing down the street in the wake of the ambulance.

It was farther than they had thought, but not a word was spoken. Gazing from the window, they could all see that the neighborhood was becoming poorer and poorer, and the gas lamps were so far apart that they were almost useless.

As the clang of the bell warned them that the right locality was at hand, the driver slowed up and Bert and the doctor sprang from the carriage.

A moment later they were in the thick of a wretched-looking crowd of both men and women, who had gathered around the prostrate form of the victim.

"I had to knock him down; he'd have killed me if I hadn't," explained a surly voice, and one of the two policemen present cleared a path for the surgeon.

"What? You knock him to pieces and then ring for us to mend him!" cried the ambulance surgeon, angrily. "Well, you cops are dandies! That's all I've got to say about you!"

The policeman grunted, but he took it good-naturedly.

"I guess you'd have hit him, too, if he'd come at you with a knife," he said, quickly. "The fellow was either drunk or rip-roaring crazy. Just hold on a minute and he'll show you!" he added.

The man that the ambulance had come for was staggering to his feet, and in another second he began muttering incoherently.

"Are you sure it's a hospital case instead of an arrest?" asked the surgeon, as he swung the patient around where he could see his face. "We've got no room up there for drunks or disorderlies!"

"He's crazy, I tell you," said the policeman, growing angry. "Think I've been on the force ten years and don't know what I'm a-doing? Take him along, and take him quick! It's a straitjacket he wants, not a fine or a clubbing!"

Dr. Brookes had pressed forward while the officer was speaking, for something in the appearance of the crazy man had struck him as familiar.

Seizing the ambulance lantern, he swung it close to his face; then, both he and Bert gave a cry of horror.

"Percy Preston! as I'm alive!" cried Bert, in astonishment. "Why, I thought he was safe in a lunatic asylum!"

The words had hardly left his lips when the maniac turned on him.

He had wit enough left to catch the last two words and understand them.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, feebly. "No bolts and bars for me! Oh, I was there in the asylum—I was there! I was there! And it was Temple who sent me there! Will I ever forget it! Temple sent me there—he and Marion Marlowe!"

"Take him away, quick! He's going off into tantrums again!" bawled the officer, who

had reason to fear the maniac. "Here, I'll go with you, young man; you'll never be able to handle him alone! Get a grip on that other arm before he swings at it!"

There was a short, sharp struggle, and the maniac was forced into the ambulance; then both the officer and the surgeon climbed in and sat down on him.

Dr. Brookes was in the full glare of the light as the ambulance started, and, with the first clang of the bell, the madman yelled back at him:

"They did it! Temple and Miss Marlowe! But I've squared my account with them! I've paid them for locking me in the lunatic asylum!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST CLEW.

The doctor's handsome face paled as he caught the terrible words, and the next minute he and Bert were staring at each other. "So it is a plot! Marion has been trapped!" cried Bert, frantically. "Oh, the fiend! I have a notion to follow that ambulance and pound the life out of him!"

"He knows where they are—both Marion and Mr. Temple! I am sure of it!" was the doctor's reply.

Bert turned to look for the other policeman, but he had disappeared like magic as soon as the ambulance departed.

"Gee whiz! He lit out quick! He might have helped us!" cried the youth. "I suppose if I yell for him, I'll bring on a riot!"

"Yes; don't do it!" was the doctor's low answer, as he peered at the faces of the remarkably quiet crowd. "They are not saying much, but they look as if they meant business."

"I feel as if I could wade in and lick the lot of them," muttered Bert, "and I'd try it in a minute if it would bring me any nearer to Marion."

"I don't understand about Preston being out here," was the answer. "He was in Matteawan at last accounts, and I heard that he was a hopeless case. Can it be possible that it was not Preston?"

"Not a bit of it! I knew his voice in a minute!" said Bert, "and who else could have said what he yelled back—that Temple and Marion put him in the asylum?"

They had broken through the small crowd as they spoke and were nearing the carriage when some one jerked the sleeve of the doctor's coat violently.

The young man stopped short.

It was a dwarfish-looking negro who had hold of him. As he glanced down into the black face, he could hardly restrain his impatience.

"Let go of me! What do you mean?" he began, and then stopped. There was something in the cunning face that made him suddenly suspicious.

The fellow raised himself on tiptoe and muttered something. It was an incoherent jargon, but still Dr. Brookes hesitated.

"This fellow knows something. Wait," he called out to Bert, but the youth had already joined the ladies in the carriage. The miserable creatures who formed the crowd had slunk away like so many rats to their holes, all except the apish fellow, who was still gripping the doctor's coat sleeve.

Reginald Brookes bent a little so as to see him more clearly in the darkness.

"He is er bad egg, boss, dat coon," muttered the fellow. "He done bring a gal down hyar ter night, an' him as crazy as er bedbug an' drunk as er lobster!"

Dr. Brookes caught only a few words, but they were quite enough. Grabbing the fellow by the shoulder, he dragged him to the carriage.

"He says that Preston brought a girl out here from the city to-night," he repeated to his companions. "Can it be possible that it was Marion?"

"God forbid!" muttered Miss Allyn, with a cry of horror; then she calmed herself instantly and peered closely at the fellow.

Bert had already told them who the madman was, and, for awhile, it was almost impossible to think very clearly, but Miss Allyn was a woman of unusual nerve, and her wits never deserted her, even in the most trying moments.

"Make him take us where he saw the girl, at once!" she said, quickly. "We must find

out if there is a grain of truth in what he is saying."

The negro's teeth began to chatter and his eyeballs rolled convulsively.

It was plain that he did not relish the work she had suggested.

"'Taint safe, miss," he muttered, with a quick glance into the carriage. "Dey wuz in Dago alley; dat's de toughest ob de lot! Doan' ketch dis niggah roamin' roun' dose hyah quarters 'cept in de middle ob de day, w'en he cain see whar he's a-goin'!"

"But if we pay you well?" began the doctor.

The negro shrank back and tried to pull away from the hand that was upon his shoulder.

"'Tain't safe," he mumbled again. "Dey's all drunk at dis time ob night in dat alley! If de gal am dere, she's hid whar nobody cain't find her!"

"I'll find her, if she's on earth!" exclaimed Bert, emphatically, "but we are only losing time here, doc! Let's go somewhere, or do something. Tie the nigger to the carriage and drag him if he won't guide us!"

A perfect howl of terror escaped the monstrous thick lips; then, with a deft wriggle of the body, the dwarf slipped out of his coat, and, leaving it in the doctor's hands, darted off into the darkness.

There was no use in following—the young physician saw that in a glance—the neighborhood was overflowing with too many dangers.

The class of people who lived there were evidently of the toughest in Chicago, and, besides, the locality was fairly criss-crossed with dark, impenetrable alleys.

"If one only knew who to call upon for aid," he said, as his glance swept the rows of dark, dilapidated buildings that lined the narrow street, "but there is hardly a light to be seen, except in the groggeries, and we have no use at present for drunken loafers."

"Not a policeman in sight," said Bert, disgustedly. "Why, even the gas lamps have 'jags'—just look at them, doc, and that one arc light on that corner is spluttering with the hiccoughs!"

"It's a dirty place to be in, all right," was the answer; "but I suppose it looks better in the daytime than it does at night, particularly on a night like this, when there is not a star shining; but there is one thing I can do, and I'll do it at once!"

"Drive back to the hospital," he called to the driver. "I'll have another interview with Preston, and, perhaps, I can learn something. He may tell the truth even in his ravings."

They started back and were some distance from the spot when a peculiar sound reached them.

A vehicle of some kind was coming over the rough roadway, and, as it loomed up before them in the darkness, they could see that the horse was either picking its way as best it could or was being guided by a drunken driver.

To avoid a collision, their own carriage was stopped, and, once more, Bert and the doctor sprang to the street.

"He's as drunk as a lord and actually asleep on the box," called out Bert, after he had stopped the weary horse and climbed up to investigate.

Dr. Brookes peered into the cab, but it held no occupant. The next second something caught his eye. It was a white wrap of some kind, lying in a heap in one corner of the empty vehicle.

Without a word, he jerked open the door and caught up the garment; then sprang back to the other carriage, holding it out toward Miss Allyn.

"See! It was in the cab!" he cried, with a groan of agony. "It is Marion's wrap! I knew it in an instant!"

Miss Ellis burst into tears, but Miss Allyn hardly heeded her. Every drop of blood in her body was pulsing at that moment.

"Marion is here, or near here! There is no doubt about it!" she said, clearly. "She has been followed by Preston and inveigled into some den! Quick! Let us hurry to the nearest telephone and send an alarm to the police station of this precinct! It is the first step to be taken in Marion's rescue!"

"Oh, Marion! Poor Marion!" cried Miss Ellis, who was weeping pitifully. "Oh, what if she has been killed!"

Bert sprang into the carriage and put his arm around her. He had never realized until then how much he cared for her.

Miss Ellis forgot all her jealousy of Miss Watson as Bert drew her head to his shoulder and murmured: "We will find her! Don't cry; we will send out an alarm, as Alma says, and then we will go, ourselves, into the darkest corner of those alleys! There is no spot on earth so dark but that we would search it for Marion!"

Dr. Brookes was in time to hear the last sentence.

"She shall be found, and to-night! I swear it!" he said, hoarsely. "We will ferret her out in spite of everything; but, Alma, you and Miss Ellis must not go; it will be too dangrous! It will only hamper us in our work if we are obliged to protect you!"

"Then go, this instant!" cried Alma, quickly. "See, there is the cab with the drunken driver! Make use of it, you two, while we drive on to the hospital! They will surely keep us! If you get any news, communicate it to us there, and, whatever we learn, we will 'phone to the station-house in this precinct!"

The words were imperative, and no one dreamed of disobeying them.

The two young men made a rush for the cab, but it was absolutely impossible to awaken the driver.

"Yank him down!" bawled Bert, as he caught the fellow by the leg.

Dr. Brookes got hold of an arm and steadied him a little, but even a hard bump on the cobblestones failed to arouse him to full consciousness.

"It's a plain, ordinary drunk, I am sure of it," said the doctor. "Bundle him in here, Bert; we can't run away with his cab entirely, and as soon as we see an officer we'll explain the situation."

"And he'll say we are running away with the whole shooting match—driver, cab and all," laughed Bert; "but there isn't any danger of our seeing an officer!"

A moment later the drunken man was doubled up inside of his own cab, and the two young men were on the box, the doctor keeping an eye on their passenger while Bert did the driving.

Miss Allyn and Miss Ellis were on their way to safety, but these two loyal hearts were going straight into danger, perhaps to death, in their search for Marion.

CHAPTER X.

THE CAPTURE OF JONES.

"There's the station-house at last!" exclaimed Bert.

They had been driving carefully for nearly twenty minutes, and had inquired their way four times of men who seemed skulking along the streets, and who had infinite trouble in speaking the English language.

With a sigh of relief the doctor sprang from the box and rushed into the station-house to make a few explanations.

It took very little talking to satisfy the officer on duty. He was accustomed to stories of crime in his precinct.

"Dago alley is a bad place, but my men have been there before, and they'll go again," he said, promptly. "I'll dispatch a squad at once. Do you want to go with them?"

The doctor assented eagerly, and just then two officers of the station dragged in the drunken driver.

The fellow was awake now, but decidedly cloudy in his mind. After a great deal of prodding he told them where Marion left his cab, but of her whereabouts after that he could tell them nothing.

"It's a plain case of highway abduction," said the sergeant, shaking his head. "Somebody followed the girl for a reason, and when this brute insulted her, as he must have done to make her jump from his cab, the other rascal's work was dead easy."

While the men were getting ready, Bert and the doctor held a quiet consultation.

"Shall we both go with them, or had one of us better go back to the hospital and see Preston?" asked Bert.

"Exactly what I was thinking," was the thoughtful answer. "If the fellow is really guilty, he is likely to let out something, and a clew is what we are badly in need of at present."

"Then you go and see him," said Bert, decidedly. "You know how to talk to the loon, and I'm blest if I do. I'll borrow a 'pop' and go with the officers. Now, no objections, old man! One end of this deal is just as important as the other!"

Dr. Brookes was forced to yield. He knew that Bert spoke wisely.

There were two men in the case now that must not be lost sight of; one was Preston, the madman, and the other was the drunken driver.

After the searching party had left the station-house he explained the case more fully to the sergeant, and received from him all the assurances possible in so doubtful an undertaking.

"If it was daytime now it would be different," he said, anxiously; "but the inhabitants of those alleys are always drunk at night, and an officer walking through there in the dark is an easy target. They'd 'pop' him behind his back in a minute if they felt like it."

"Then what a place for an innocent girl!" cried the young physician, with a shudder.

"The worst in Chicago," was the solemn answer; "and that's saying a good deal, if it is my native city."

The doctor turned from the desk almost overwhelmed with anguish.

"Here's a call for you, sergeant!" cried out a voice from one corner of the big room, as a telephone bell sounded.

"A lady from the Sheltering Arms wants to say something to you."

"That must be Miss Allyn, the lost girl's friend!" said the doctor, quickly. "We sent them to the hospital when we confiscated that carriage."

The sergeant went to the telephone, and in a minute he was scowling savagely.

"She says that lunatic has been raving ever since he arrived there, and he says that Marion Marlowe is lost forever; that she has been raffled off to a gang of the toughest characters in Dago alley!"

The doctor bit his lip.

"It may be only his delusion," he tried to say, hopefully.

Without replying, the sergeant turned to his assistant.

"Wire McCafferty at Dominick's groggery to search Dago alley thoroughly," he said, sternly. "Dominick is the only man in that section who is anything like honest, and I told my men to call there, in case I needed them," he explained, turning to Dr. Brookes.

The doctor turned again to leave the station-house, and again a call over the telephone prevented him.

"The livery stable where this drunken brute belongs," reported the assistant at the instrument. "His name is O'Shea, and he's very unreliable. They were just on the verge of discharging him."

There was a moment of silence, and the balance of the conversation was reported.

"Left the stand at Dearborn street at eleven-fifteen. Fare, a young lady; did not report her destination to the office. They want us to hold horse, cab and driver, as they are already on the way out here."

"We'll hold 'em fast enough," was the sergeant's grim answer. "He'll stay right here until that girl is found, if it isn't until the day after the millennium."

Once more the doctor thanked him, and then started for the hospital. There was no car line nearby, so he was obliged to walk.

As he hurried along he looked up at the sky where the faintest glimmer of dawn was showing.

Would they find her, his idol, the loved one of his heart?

A groan of bitter anguish was the only answer.

He thought of Bert, now peering here and there into the dark, grimy corners of the alley, and for a moment he regretted that he had not insisted upon accompanying him.

Bert, the lad with a lion's heart in his breast, was searching for the woman they both loved.

The drunken driver and the maniac were both safe now, and he would have been so much happier could he have been with him, searching for Marion.

For a moment he was strongly tempted to turn back toward the alley, but as he stood undecided his natural caution warned him. What could he do, alone and unarmed, in that dangerous locality? It would be the extreme of folly to risk such an undertaking.

He glanced at his watch and once more hurried on. It was nearly three o'clock, and yet he was not even sleepy.

The streets were deserted, and there was a peculiar mist over everything, which made even the most commonplace objects look strangely weird and distorted.

A shuffling step, coming toward him on the pavement, suddenly attracted his atten-

tion. It was the first person he had met in the ten minutes of walking.

The doctor buttoned his coat tightly over his watch and money and walked steadily on. He was just in the mood to meet highwaymen or looters.

Way down at the corner he could see a glimmer of electric light, but the gas lamps between were like tiny candles in the mist that seemed floating in the air.

Suddenly a form came between him and the light, and the man who was approaching stopped unsteadily and peered at him.

"Well, what can I do for you, my friend?" began the doctor, civilly.

There was silence for a minute, and then a strangely familiar voice answered:

"You can direct me to Dearborn street, if you know the way. I have been in a den of thieves and am two-thirds dead. Give me a nickel and a street-car, boss, and you'll do me a favor."

Dr. Brookes moved nearer as the fellow was speaking, but he turned up his coat collar at the same time and pulled his hat brim down lower.

"What place did you strike?" he asked, in a slightly altered voice. "Not Dago alley, I hope, my good fellow?"

"You've hit it," was the maudlin answer, and then the fellow burst out crying. He was utterly worn out with walking and positively ill from bad whisky.

"Come this way, my friend," said the doctor, taking him by the arm; "it's only a short walk, and I'll go along with you."

He turned back toward the station-house half dragging the fellow, and had nearly reached the steps before his companion began to regain his senses.

"What you taking me here for? I ain't done nothing!" he suddenly cried out, as he recognized the station house lights.

Dr. Brookes took a grip upon his coat collar that was anything but playful.

"You'll find out what I have brought you here for in a minute, Bill Jones!" he said, furiously. "I happen to know your reputation as a sneak, and I also know that you are a friend of Percy Preston's."

CHAPTER XI.

IN DAGO ALLEY.

When the remaining members of the Temple Theatrical Company retired that night, not so much as a word had been received of the whereabouts of Mr. Temple or of Marion.

Every building on the north side was being ransacked now, for a general alarm had been sent out for the young girl, and the bluecoats were showing unusual interest in the case.

But their courageous efforts were of no avail, for Marion was hidden as safely from her friends as she was from her enemies. When she dropped from the window of the rear room of the saloon to the mud of the alley, she was extremely fortunate in receiving no injury.

She scrambled to her feet instantly and was off like the wind, her one thought being to get away from those who pursued her.

As she flew through the darkness, she all at once collided with some one. It took but an instant for her to see that it was a woman. "Quick! Hide me!" she cried, breathlessly. "Oh, madam! Do, please, hide me! I am pursued by fiends! They will kill me if they find me!"

There was no answer whatsoever to her piteous appeal, and Marion bent lower and stared at the poor creature.

"Oh, I see! You are an Italian! You do not understand!"

The next minute she had pulled off her watch and chain and was dangling them before the woman.

Instantly, the woman snatched for them, but Marion jerked the watch back, at the same time putting her hand on the woman's shoulder and pushing her gently.

"Home! Take me home with you!" she begged, eagerly. "Take me home! Hide me, and you shall have it!"

The word "home" alone caught the woman's ear. She grabbed Marion's arm and almost dragged her after her.

It seemed an age before the wretched creature reached her shanty, and, when there, the clank of the rusty padlock sounded cruelly ominous. But it was a woman with whom she had to deal now. She might be vicious,

even murderous, but she was not so horrible as the negroes.

When the door was locked behind them, Marion almost cried from happiness. At least, she was safe for a few minutes and could get her wits together.

There were several rooms in the shanty, but only one of them was lighted, and as Marion sank into a rickety, backless chair, she gazed around curiously.

It was the strangest place by far that she had ever visited. There were objects of every kind piled on the floor, chairs and table.

"A receiver of stolen goods."

Marion breathed the words involuntarily. She had heard of such places, and this seemed to fit the description.

"That is why she locks everything so carefully," she whispered again. "Oh, but that makes it safe for me! She will let no one enter!"

The woman had laid down a big bundle that she was carrying and now came forward towards her guest, her small, beady eyes twinkling as she held out her coarse hand expectantly.

"Are you sure I am safe?" asked Marion, pointing at the door.

The woman nodded her head. She understood the gesture.

"Give me something to eat." The young girl spoke as firmly as possible, at the same time pointing to some dishes on a dingy table.

The woman ladled out something from a greasy kettle and then poured a liquid supposed to be tea from a spoutless teapot. Marion swallowed the stuff greedily, for she was choking with thirst, then tasted the food, but she could not eat it.

The virago was beginning to chatter now, and it was plainly to be seen that she was growing angry.

Marion handed her the watch, with tears upon her lashes. It was hard to part with it, but she must buy her safety. If she could only buy liberty! Freedom from that alley! She glanced around the room with a sudden determination.

"Let me have some of these, madam?" she said, taking hold of a pile of wretchedly dirty garments. "Let me have a dress and hat, and I will pay for them."

Again the woman understood her looks and gestures, and promptly asked a question in very fair English.

"How much-a mon?"

Marion smiled bitterly at this greed, but she had to accept the situation.

She bargained with the old creature, and at last gave her a dollar, taking pains that she should not see that she had any more money.

As she was turning over the pile of garments, a peculiar sound came to her ears. Some one was moving back and forth in one of the adjoining rooms.

"Who is it?"

Marion asked the question nervously as she pointed toward the door. All the old feeling of fear and horror had come back to her in an instant.

A scowl darkened the old woman's face, and she began chattering loudly, trying, it seemed to Marion, to drown out the sounds completely.

The young girl went on with her selection of clothes, but her heart was beating wildly. Suppose one of those negroes should be in that room! Had she not made matters worse by trusting herself to this woman? A rattle of the padlock on the outer door put an end to her reflections, for, in an instant, the woman extinguished the lamp, and the place was in darkness.

There was another rattle; then some blows and kicks; then some one went away, swearing volubly in Italian.

The lamp was carefully relighted, and the bargaining went on. Marion had secured a complete disguise with which she hoped to make her escape from the alley, when once more she heard sounds, as if some one in the inner room was groping about in the darkness.

There was no time to be lost. She must escape while it was still dark.

The young lady looked around for a place to make her change of dress. But the old woman, whose prisoner she was, had no idea of letting her go yet; she intended to get possession of the rest of her money and jewels.

She chattered and gestured and even danced in her eagerness, and, as Marion still refused, she shook her fists excitedly.

Marion hesitated a moment, with the energy of despair.

Was she sure of her liberty, her freedom, after all, or would the old creature rob her and then laugh at her distress? It was a question which no measure of thought could answer.

At least, she must risk it.

There was nothing else.

With a groan of anguish, she handed over, one by one, her pretty trinkets. All but one; that was a locket which Bert Jackson had given her.

As she clutched it, eagerly, the old woman struck at her.

Instantly, all the blood in Marion's body rebelled. She could bear insults, perhaps, but a blow from this creature—never!

She straightened herself to her full height and caught up the unwieldy iron kettle.

With a shriek of rage, the hag flew at her.

Marion uttered a cry for help and then struck out bravely.

The next instant there was a crash that shook the crumbling building, and the inner door broke loose from its hinges and was splintered to atoms.

A man had bounded from the darkness of the inside chamber and was grappling with the woman.

Marion gasped with astonishment. It was Mr. Temple.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESCUE.

Marion did not stop to ask questions then, for she had all she could do to help her manager.

Together they bound the old virago hand and foot and tied a towel over her mouth; then both sat down and looked at each other.

Marion's next move was a decidedly natural one. She burst into tears, and in a moment her head was pillowed on Mr. Temple's bosom.

"Poor little Marion! Poor child! You came here to seek me! I am sure of it," whispered her friend.

Marion dried her eyes and told him her story. When she had finished it was time to escape from the shanty.

Mr. Temple recovered all of Marion's trinkets and money, while the virago glared at them in fury; then, carefully unlocking the door, they peered out into the alley.

"It is still too dark! We must wait," whispered the manager, softly. "We are safer here than we would be outside, unless, as you suggested, we disguise ourselves in those garments."

Marion took a sharp glance at the heap of clothes and shook her head in disgust.

"We would catch smallpox or something, I am sure, Mr. Temple. Suppose we lock the door again and wait a little longer."

"Listen! I hear some one shouting!" said the manager, softly. "It may be the police! Listen, Marion!"

Marion put her head out of the door, but all was still. All that was to be heard was the sound of cursing in a nearby groggery.

They locked the door again and sat down on the stools, and Mr. Temple put his hand to his head wearily.

"You have time to tell me your story now," whispered Marion, tenderly. "How did you come here, Mr. Temple? Do hurry and tell me."

Once more her friend passed his hand across his brow.

"I can't remember exactly, Marion," he said, feebly. "I really think I must have been drugged on the train. Bill Jones, my old 'supe,' was aboard. I remember that distinctly. In order to keep him from talking to me, I sat in the smoker with another fellow, and——"

"Was his name Jack Hart" broke in Marion, eagerly.

"I believe it was," said Mr. Temple, stopping in his story and staring at her.

"Then it was Percy Preston in disguise. But go on, Mr. Temple! What did the wretches do? I ought not to have interrupted!"

"I took a glass of beer with him just before we reached Chicago," went on the manager. "The next thing I remember I was jolting over the stones in a cab; then later, something happened; I don't know what. When I came to myself I was a prisoner in this shanty, my jewelry and money gone, and with these clothes on me, Marion."

The young girl glanced at him. She had not noticed his garments before.

Now she saw that they were cheap and dowdy—not at all like the stylish ones he was in the habit of wearing.

"You must have been drugged and then struck," she said, with the tears running down her cheeks. "Oh, Mr. Temple, I am so sorry! so dreadfully sorry!"

Once more he took her in his arms and pressed a kiss upon her brow. They were companions in misfortune, and those are always dearest.

The old woman had given up struggling now and lay quietly upon the floor, so Mar-

ion went over to her and endeavored to make her more comfortable.

"We wouldn't have done it if you hadn't been so wicked," she said, sternly; "but we'll send some one to you, just as soon as we are safe. It will probably be a policeman, but I guess that by that time you'll be glad to see him."

"She will, indeed," said Mr. Temple, smiling; then he opened the door again and took another glance into the alley.

"Quick! Marion, look! Something is happening!" he cried, softly. "I just saw a dozen forms scoot by, and there's an awful racket in that groggery! Oh, if it is only a raid, we will be safe in a minute!"

Marion sprang to the door and listened intently.

"It does sound as if something was going on," she said, cautiously; "but perhaps it is only the customary noise of the alley. You and I are hardly fit to judge, I fancy!"

Before Mr. Temple could reply there was another rush of feet down the alley; then the unmistakable sound of a night-stick being rapped against something awoke instantaneous feelings of joy in the hearts of the two prisoners.

"It is the police," began Marion, when a ringing voice in the alley interrupted her.

"There he is, officer! There's the bow-legged negro! Quick! He's down in the mud! Turn the barrel over him!"

Marion waited for no more! It was Bert Jackson's voice. She darted out into the mud and darkness of the alley.

"Bert! Oh, Bert!"

Her voice rang out like a trumpet.

"Here we are, Bert! down here! I have found Mr. Temple!"

There was an instant of silence; then a great shout followed, and a perfect army of burly bluecoats came tearing down the alley.

As Bert reached Marion's side he caught her up in his arms, and, for a moment, she was in danger of being devoured bodily.

Then the young man set her down gently and fairly hugged his manager. For once in his life, Bert was far beyond talking.

Explanations followed, and the march to liberty was begun. Under such able protection they were soon out of danger.

At Dominick's groggery one of the policemen telephoned to the station-house, and an hour later Marion and her manager were sitting in the sergeant's office, telling him as calmly as they could, the details of their experiences.

Bert took charge of the telephone and soon had the rest of the company notified.

Not only the star had been found, but the manager also.

"And, oh, Alma!" cried Marion, when she fell into her friend's arms a little later, "to think that the guilty should have been captured, too! It is perfectly wonderful, as well as perfectly awful!"

"A rattling good night's work, I call it!" was Bert's comment, as he watched her eagerly. "We got the drunken driver, as well as Bill Jones and Preston! Oh, there's no place on earth that can beat Chicago!"

"I guess you are right, young man," spoke up the chief of police, who was present at the reunion. "We have the worst people and the best ones in this little village. It's a big contract to please them all. You can gamble on that! But we do our best to keep law and order."

"I fancy a man without a cent in his clothes and no jewelry would be comparatively safe, even in Dago alley," said Dr. Brookes, grimly; "but show those rascally natives a ninety-eight-cent watch and they'd fall over each other to commit a murder."

They were all grouped around Marion in the hotel parlor, and, at the chief's request, she told them of the raffle.

Bert's eyes snapped fire as she described the scene, and neither Alma Allyn nor the doctor could quite restrain their feelings.

"In the hands of a lunatic! That is where you were, you poor dear!" cried Miss Allyn, tearfully.

"I was in the hands of a score or more at that time, if I am any judge," said Marion, sadly; "but Percy Preston was mad—thoroughly so. I was glad when Bert told me he was in the hospital."

"Percy Preston is dead," said the hotel clerk, coming in. "Here's a telegram for you, doctor, that I accidentally opened."

There was a general sigh of relief; he was safe at last.

Dr. Brookes hastened to the office to notify the authorities at the Matteawan asylum.

"I guess I must lie down for a while now," said Marion, sweetly. "What time this afternoon do we rehearse, Mr. Temple?"

There was a smile of admiration upon the manager's face as he replied:

"I think, Marion, our audience will be glad to see us just as we are to-night," he said, happily. "Miss Allyn has written up the whole affair, and I have sent it to the papers, so you have nothing to do but rest until evening."

"And to-night I shall outdo myself!" cried Marion, gayly; "for I am just overflowing with joy over the safe return of my manager!"

"Always thinking of others," murmured Mr. Temple, as she left the room; then he

turned to Bert Jackson, who was standing near him.

"I need rest myself, Bert," he said, rather feebly; "so I appoint you assistant manager of the theatre this evening. See that everything is done that is possible, Jackson."

Bert nodded his head and started out.

"I'll find time to tighten the chains around Bill Jones and that drunken driver as well," he whispered to himself. "There's very little to be done at the theatre, because it is already done. Why, haven't I been manager *pro tem.* ever since we came to Chicago?"

Bert was as good as his word, and the engagement ended satisfactorily.

The theatre was crowded every night by admiring audience, and, before the company left the town, the guilty were punished.

THE END.

The story in next week's MY QUEEN (No. 21), entitled "Marion Marlowe in St. Paul; or, The Company's Mascot in a Double Deal," will tell of some thrilling adventures Marion had through her fancy for a newsboy "mascot."

PATTERN COLUMN.

By special arrangements with the manufacturers we are enabled to supply the readers of MY QUEEN with the patterns of all garments described or illustrated in this column at TEN CENTS each. Address, "Pattern Column," MY QUEEN, 238 William Street, New York City.

☞ *In ordering patterns be sure to give size and number*

FASHION NOTES.

The latest French skirt is so delightfully clinging that it really seemed moulded to the form, saving only at the back, where a suggestion of fulness occurs through the medium of a sloped center seam, the only seam of any importance in the entire skirt.

Useful aids to home millinery are the ready-made bows and rosettes of ribbon, all wired into shape, which can be purchased in the shops. Ribbons of all kinds, colors and widths are used. While this is not a new branch of industry, the productions are more varied and artistic than ever before.

One of the novelties shown in the fashionable stores is a shoulder cape of colored or white chiffon, plaited and frilled and combined with lace, plumes and ribbon in the most intricate manner. It is said to be for evening wear, but as it has no warmth its mission must be found in the ball room, where some little covering is needed between the dances.

For women who do not like the full gathered undersleeve so popular on winter gowns, fashionable modistes are making long, closely fitted forearm pieces in monsquetaire fashion. This part of the sleeve is formed of braided cloth or silk embroidery, Oriental brocade, tucked peau de soie, crepe de chine, or soft panne velvet in delicate tricolor melanges.

The greater portion of the new evening dresses have low, rounding Empire bodices decorated with a fall of costly lace or embroidered chiffon either in fichu or Recamier fashion, and to most of these gowns strappings and choux of black velvet ribbon are added. There is a choice in sleeves, as the very short, the elbow varieties, and the extremely long mousquetaire styles are equally favored.

The full blouse grows in popularity. It seems a mistake to imagine that only very slender figures can wear it, for the Paris dressmakers seem to make it look well on almost every one. The blouse referred to is the one full all about, nearly concealing the belt. The sides appear to be most cleverly shaped to give as narrow an effect as possible to the figure.

A gown that has been designed for fall wear is a soft, quaint garment of limp material, with a scantily gathered skirt and a broad, flowered silk sash tied around the waist, rather broadly in front, the fringed ends falling to the hem at the back, the bottom of the skirt is trimmed with a lattice work of white chenille, from which lace flounces gush. The surplice bodice is finished with a broad, flat Puritan collar of lace, clasped with a large oval brooch. The sleeves are slashed at the elbow and wrist, puffs of lace bursting from the interstices.

No. 2,389—NEW TIGHT-FITTING JACKETS.

This smart street jacket is still in favor as a separate garment or with the tailor skirt. The illustration shows one of these in brown kersey. It is adjusted with the usual underarm side-back and center seams. If the jacket is to be made up for a suit, it could be made of camel's hair, cheviot, broad-cloth, homespun, serge or diagonal.

The pattern is cut in sizes 32 to 42 inches bust measure. Size 36 requires two and one-half yards of 42-inch, or one and three-fourth yards of 34-inch material.

No. 2,402—ONE-PIECE SKIRT.

(With graduated circular flounce.)

The circular flounce gives to the lower part of the skirt a certain soft ripple effect not obtained by any other shaping, and that is still very fashionable. Homespun, satin-faced cloth, novelty, poplin and Venetians, foulard and taffeta silk are all suitable materials for the design.

The pattern is cut in sizes 22 to 30 inches waist measure. Size 24 requires 6 yards of 42-inch, or 5 yards of 54-inch material.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY GRACE SHIRLEY

NOTE.—This department is a special feature of this publication, and it will be appreciated, we feel sure, by all our readers. It is conducted by Miss Shirley, whose remarkable ability to answer all questions, no matter how delicate the import, is well known. Readers of "MY QUEEN" need not hesitate to write her on any subject. Miss Shirley will have their interests at heart and will never refuse her assistance or sympathy. As all letters are answered only through the columns of "MY QUEEN," it is unnecessary to enclose stamps. STREET & SMITH.

"My room-mate and I have been reading the 'My Queen' books with the greatest interest, and really there are few girls like Marion. She is just full of good works. We have been comparing the girls at Yale (that I knew before I was called home) with Marion, and none seem to have the kindness about them that Marion has. I think she loves Dr. Brookes just as well as Mr. Ray, otherwise she would choose between them. I think I would choose Dr. Brookes, but my friend would choose Mr. Ray. We would like to know whom you would choose. How many books will there be before this series ends? Effie and I spend the pleasantest evening when this book comes out. I wish Marion would marry Dr. Brookes, but I feel as though she will wed neither one.

"F. A. B. G."

We are pleased to learn that you enjoy "My Queen" so thoroughly. We believe that there are many women in the world as true and noble as Marion, and, no doubt, you will discover them some day. We cannot choose between Dr. Brookes and Mr. Ray. They are both of them possessed of enviable traits, and either one of them is worthy of any girl's esteem. The end of the "My Queen" series has not yet been printed, so you and Effie have many more pleasant evenings to which to look forward.

"I have read your novels in 'My Queen' up to the last number and think they are delightful. My father objected to my reading other novels, but does not object to yours. I also read your good advice to those who seek it, so I have taken the liberty to ask a few questions. I am only sixteen, but for two years have kept company with a young gentleman; we have had but one quarrel during that time which lasted only for a short while. I love him with all my heart, and I think he cares for me. I have two girl friends who are married, although they are only seventeen, and only knew their husbands six months. They say my lover does not love me because he does not marry me. I know I would say 'no' if he wished to marry right away, for I think I am too young to get married. My lover cares much about society, but will not go out unless I go, too. All last winter he gave up all of his pleasures because I did not care about society. Should I go to please him? Is it right to be so selfish? Some of my friends say we should not go together because we are both light complexioned. Is this true?

"ETHEL M. G."

Your lover shows his good sense in not speaking of marriage at so early an age, and we are glad that you, too, think that you are too young. The responsibilities of matrimony are very serious, and you are wise not to be in haste to assume them. The fact that your lover gave up his pleasure for your sake ought to induce you to to be equally unselfish and to give up something for his sake. It might be a good idea if you went out once in a while to please him, since he is so devoted to you.

We do not think that the matter of complexions need be considered very seriously. Do not pay too much attention to the idle talk of your acquaintances. We judge from your letter that you are favored with a large supply of good, common sense, and your opinions are probably quite as valuable as theirs.

"I have read every issue of 'My Queen,' and I think Miss Marlowe is really the noblest, truest and sweetest girl I ever heard of. I get sick at heart sometimes when I think of her and then of other girls that only pretend to be your friends. Most of the girls around me have sweethearts and they tease me because I have none. I am only a poor colored girl, sixteen years old, but I would not be taken for colored if it were not for my features. I have often been told that I am stuck up, but I am not. It is only my nature. My mother is sending me to the business college to learn stenography. Do you know of any story book telling of adventures of a colored girl or something nice about her, or how she won many friends?

ADELAIDE S."

We believe that there are lots of Marion Marlowes in the world, and, no doubt, you will run across some girls like her before long. Try to make the most of the good traits in your friends' characters. You need not concern yourself about sweethearts now, for you have plenty of years ahead of you and, no doubt, will have suitors in abundance. Stenography is a good thing for anyone to know, and we think you are wise to fit yourself for a business woman. We do not recall the name of any book that exactly fulfils your requirements, but you might be interested in "Bricks Without Straw," by Albion W. Tourgee.

"A girl works with me that I dearly love. She pretends to love me the same, but I have found her untrue in different things. She is pretty, with light hair, gray eyes and a fair skin, but is inclined to be quarrelsome and would be liable to tell a falsehood at any time. She would do anything for me, and I would like to know if she is really true to me. WINIFRED L. G."

We think that since you see this girl every day you certainly ought to be able to judge whether she is true. Actions always speak louder than words, and if her actions show that she is devoted to your interests that ought to convince you. It is possible that you are entertaining doubts that are really without foundation.

"I go to see my girl every night. She sits on my lap and puts her arm around my neck and hugs and kisses me all the while I am there. I told her one night that she was soft, and she said she would eat me up she loved me so hard. I don't mind being kissed when I leave her, for one or two of them are all right, but when you get them all the time they get stale. JOE F."

Poor Joe! Your tale is an unusual one, to say the least! Most men consider it a positive delight to have an affectionate girl, while here you are actually writhing under the fire of your sweetheart's caresses! We hardly know how to advise you to act, but can say candidly that we do not believe that you can possibly love a girl whose kisses you consider "stale," so wouldn't it be the act of a gentleman to either withdraw and allow her to meet some one who can reciprocate her affection or else endeavor to cultivate a taste for kisses? If we knew the young lady, we would know exactly what to say to her. She is very foolish, indeed, to "waste her sweetness on the desert air," particularly as her only reward is the danger of losing her lover. She should "eat you" at once, if she expects to save you.

"I am a constant reader of your paper, and would like you to advise me. I went with a fellow for about a year. He loved me and was very jealous, especially of my girl chum's fellow. He showed me all his attention until at last he expected me to meet him every night, and as I made every excuse he used to manage to be around where he knew I would be with my girl friends until at last it got tiresome, and when I would see him coming I would get out of his sight. So one night he took one of my girl friends and got her a soda. I heard of it and I asked him, and he owned up that he did it to make me jealous. So at last I broke off from him and he wrote a note to see if I was willing to let bygones be bygones, and I did not answer it. Now that I don't ever see him, I would like your opinion as to whether it would be proper for me to try and find him and make up or to let things drift on.
"AGNES S."

We cannot understand why you should wish to "make up" after trying so hard to rid yourself of this young man. If you repent having lost his friendship and are willing to devote yourself to him to the exclusion of your other friends, you can write to him and say so, but, perhaps, it would be just as well for you to wait until you are perfectly sure of yourself, as it is neither wise nor kind to trifle with a young man's affection. If you do "make up" with him, tell him plainly how you feel about seeing him every night. It looks to us as if this persistency on his part were all that you objected to in him, and, when he understands it, he may try not to monopolize you.

"Three years ago I made the acquaintance of a fellow who was as beautiful as you can imagine. We were then both about fourteen years of age. At first I had not any too much love for him, but at last I could not help loving him with all my heart, although I cannot possibly explain it except that he was the first I ever loved. We moved a block away from where we then lived and since then another boy has tried to drive the first away, although they were friends at first, but are now enemies, for they each told the other stories about me. At last the first one stopped showing me attention, but when I met him I tried to explain that I did not care for the other, but, alas! I could not make him say again that he loved me. He said, 'We are both very young and have plenty of time to think of love.' The second one has certainly shown more love for me than the first, and my mother likes him much better. He told me lately that he likes all the girls he sees, but does not say that he loves them. He also told me that his love is gone from me, but by his actions I can see that he loves me but does not want to declare himself. I will patiently wait for your answer, which I know will do me one hundred per cent. of good. IDELLA S."

You are young enough to put thoughts of love out of your mind for a time with great advantage. Better wait until you are, at least, twenty years old or more before you willingly allow such matters to claim all your attention. It seems to us that you are inclined to be too sentimental, and we think the stand of your first lover when he said that you were "both very young and had plenty of time to think of love," was very sensible. Are you sure that you are not over-estimating the amount of love that the second young man has for you? If he really cared for you and was a manly, straightforward young fellow, he would not hesitate to say so. We think that it would be best for you to decide to leave all thoughts of love to the future. Before many years are passed you will realize the wisdom of this advice.

"Please tell me what to do in this case? A man I met in the street car smiled at me so pleasantly that I could not help smiling back and as we both got off at the same corner he tipped his hat to me. I am only sixteen and very pretty. Do you think I did wrong to smile at him? I think he is old enough to be my father. LOTTIE C."

A man who is "old enough to be your father" should be in better business than smiling at young girls in the street cars. Pay no attention to him if you see him again, and, if he attempts to speak to you, tell him plainly that you do not approve of making acquaintances in that manner.

"I am a young lady of twenty-one with dark-brown hair, large blue eyes and a small face and nose. I am five feet, one inch in height. Would you kindly tell me what kind of a man I am going to marry? M. M."

We are not given to fortune-telling, but, if you are a good, loyal, honest, intelligent girl and conduct yourself properly, we have no doubt that some day you will secure a husband who is altogether desirable.

"I am a girl of fifteen, but am as large as most girls are at sixteen or seventeen. Like most young girls, I like innocent fun. I go on the Posio a great deal. There is a young man about nineteen years old. He has a young lady he keeps company with, but I let him take me home when he offered. But he insisted on putting his arm around my waist and I didn't approve of that, but I knew he had a steady girl and I was aware of his flirting ways, but I loved him more than I shall love again in a long day. I would like to go with him steady. Do you think he thinks anything of me when he was trying to torment me with his 'pleasure of hugging,' as he called it. He and one of his chums got those men's shirt waists and my mama made them. When they called for the waists I said in fun that I was going to have waists like them, and he dared me so my chum and I got them, and the boys put theirs right away and never wore them again. Now we don't even speak. Please tell me some way to win his friendship if not his love. I am going to give a party, would you ask him and his steady girl, or him alone, or not at all?

"Amy S."

Your "innocent fun," as you call it, seems to have gotten you into trouble. If the man has a "steady girl," why not let him alone? Would you like some other girl to be flirting with your "steady," if you had one, and inviting him to parties? "Do as you would be done by" in this matter, as in all others. The fact that the young man hugged you does not mean that he cares anything for you. The average man will hug any attractive girl, but that is about as much as it amounts to—a passing pastime without a grain of real sentiment.

"Would you kindly advise me as you have many other girls? I am deeply in love with a young man. I and my girl chum met him and one of his boy friends one evening on the Posio. They took us home, and I loved Charley from the moment I first heard him talk We went on the Posio several times, every time Charley took me home, but soon two other girls that dressed as stylish as any you see on the Posio took our places. I think Charley did it to accommodate his boy friend, who had both the girls on his hands. As soon as all Claude's and Charley's girl friends heard that they were devoting every evening to those two girls they told the boys that if they would rather have the F—— girls' company (who were looked down on by all the good girls and boys), why, they must not consider them as their friends. Now that the girls have other fellows, Claude and Charley are left. Would you advise me to have anything to do with Charley or not? Agnes S."

I should like very much to have Charley's version of the story. The fact that a girl is looked down upon by other girls does not always mean that she merits any such treatment. Perhaps Charley did not know anything against these girls and, if he only walked with them to please his friend, you should not lay this up against him. You might wait a while before bestowing any more of your affection upon Charley, and perhaps, in time he will come to you with explanations. If he does, we advise you to act with discretion, but always remember that "to forgive is divine." It is possible that you may some time make the mistake of walking or talking with a young man who is "looked down upon."

"I have been married for sixteen years, and I am not happy. My husband and I quarrel. I ride a wheel and he objects to it. I am a great tea drinker and he thinks I am too extravagant. I keep one girl boarder and I think he is very much infatuated with her. Would you advise me to keep her in the house? I was thinking of adopting this girl, as I have no children. My husband makes good wages, but he does not give me much of them. B. S."

It is a very difficult matter to settle family quarrels. We do not advise you to place temptation, in the shape of a "girl boarder," under your husband's very eyes, but do not act hastily, as the girl may be innocent of any thought or desire to infatuate him. To adopt the girl would probably be folly. If your husband is interested in her now, why make the way to further infatuation so easy? If your husband does not give you the money that you need, tell him plainly that you wish more, and why you wish it. That seems to be one of the crosses which many married women have to bear.

"I love an actor very much, but I do not see him very often. He is handsome and all the girls like him. They all run after him, but I can't run after him. I have a good figure and am called pretty. He makes a good deal of me when we meet, but he does not know that I love him, but I do love him so much that I would do anything for him. I am nineteen years old.

"A Love-sick Girl."

Many girls of your age become infatuated with stage life and with handsome actors. You do not say that this man has professed any love for you and, if he has not, you are very foolish to entertain any for him. A woman's love is too fine a feeling to be bestowed where it is not sought, or to be wasted where it is unappreciated. Let the other girls run after him if they want to, but be careful yourself to retain enough self-respect to make it impossible for you to share in their folly. You are too young to consider love as a serious matter and we advise you to persistently cultivate the acquaintance of other men until you find that this one does not occupy as large a share of your thoughts as he seems to at present.

"I am in love with a certain young lady four days younger than myself. She lives in another town, but I go to see her once a week Sometimes I think she loves me and then I think she loves a friend of mine who is a very good friend. When he goes to see her with me she seems to talk more to him than to me. She has told me more than once that she loved me, but I don't know whether to believe her or not on account of this friend of mine Will you please tell me what to do and how to find out for sure if she loves me? "A. H. K"

Since the young lady has assured you frequently that she loves you, we should think that that ought to be good reason for believing that she does. It is possible that she shows your friend more attention than she does yourself when you call on her together, simply from her desire to fulfill her duties as hostess. If this is the only reason that you have for doubting her love we think there is small ground for distrust.

"I love a young boy very dearly. He is very kind to me and stops and talks to me, but he never speaks of love. I feel very sad about it. I do not care for other boys because I love him so very dearly and always shall. Can you tell me what to do? GEORGIA L. S."

If he is only a "boy" he shows his good sense in not talking of love until he has arrived at man's estate. Be satisfied with his kindly friendship until you are both much older. Young people should not be in haste to think about love. You and he will probably be much better off if you spend the next few years in improving your minds and bodies than if you gave your time and thought to matters of affection. Love comes to us all sooner or later, but is not less appreciated or enjoyed if its advent is delayed until we are old enough to consider it seriously.

"I have been keeping company with a very nice gentleman for over a year. He has paid me lots of attention, but lately has grown colder. Do you think he is going to ask me to marry him? I have been told that he is jealous of me. There is another fellow wants me to go with him. Do you think I would do right by doing so?"

"MATTIE E."

We would not think that the young man's "growing colder" was a sign that he was about to propose. Men do not usually act that way when they are considering marriage. Since you are not engaged to the first young man, we can see no reason why you should not go out with the other or with three or four others, for that matter, if their society is congenial and if you desire to go.

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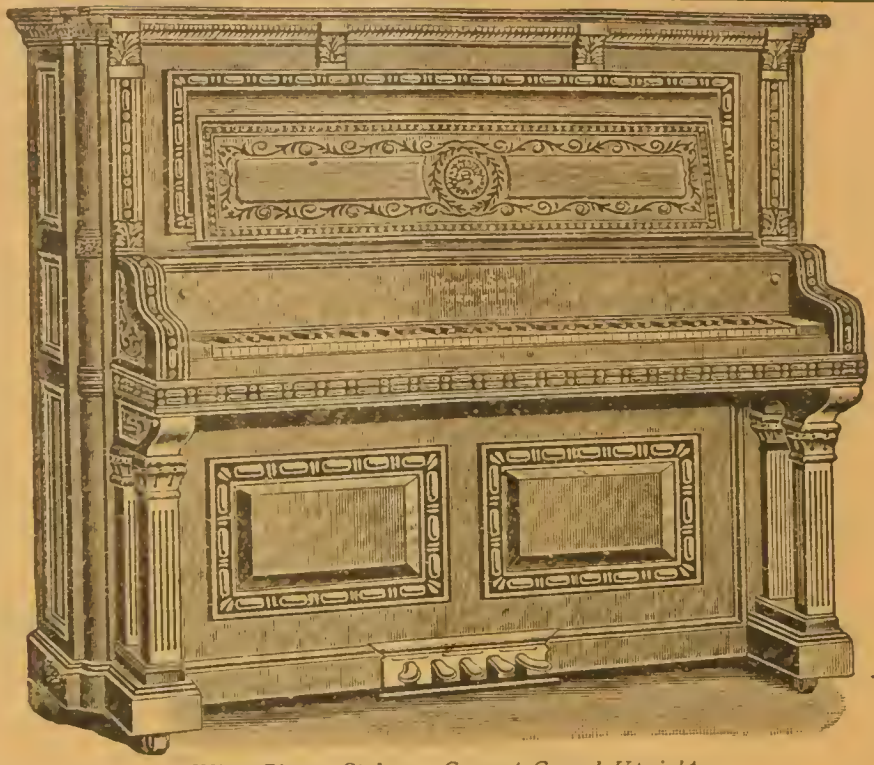

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